

act one: scene two

HELGA has gone. FAITH has settled down to read a letter from the box. EVA has taken off her coat. Her case is by her feet. She has a tin mug of tea in one hand and a piece of bread in the other. Railway station sounds. A train announcement in English.

EVA: *Trying to put on a brave face, I am very lucky. I appreciate all of this, really I do, Mutti. She takes a bite out of the bread.*

FAITH: *Reading, March 6th, 1941.*

EVA: *I'm glad to be eating the bread of freedom even if it does taste like sponge buttered with greasy salt. She sips the tea.*

FAITH: *"Dearest Eva, little Eva who must now be so big."*

EVA: *How good it is to sip the tea of England even if it does taste like dishwater. I am so fortunate not to be at home with you and Vati. How good it is to have escaped.*

FAITH: *See, I write you in English for sure am I that it now is your best language.*

EVA: *If I could, if it wasn't ungrateful, I'd wish that they hadn't made this "stuff" for me so I had to drink and eat it; wish that the houses I saw on the way here weren't all the same, red-brick squares so I could look forward to living somewhere like our house, elegant; wish they all spoke German. She sighs and takes another sip.*

FAITH: *Täntchen Marianne sends her love. She is not too well at present as her chest is very bad. It does not*

help that we have poor heating here in the small flat that Vati and me now share with her.

EVA: *Mind you, Mutti, it was wonderful going on the red bus. We went right through London. I sat on the top. I could see everything. Upstairs on a bus. It's unbelievable!*

FAITH: *Are you keeping up your good studies at school and working as hard and well as always you did? Also we hope that you be a good girl for the Mr. and Mrs. Miller. Vati wants me to tell you that he is well and his spirits are up. Life is not so bad. We are happy enough.*

An English ORGANIZER enters.

← **START**

EVA: *Standing up and bowing. Very carefully pronouncing, Goodbye to you.*

ORGANIZER: *What you on about?*

EVA: *About?*

ORGANIZER: *Never mind. Is your name Eva, pauses to work out the pronunciation, Schlesinger?*

EVA looks uncertain.

ORGANIZER: *How d'you say it? Eevaa Shshlezzinnjerr?*

EVA: *Different pronunciation, Ava Schlesinger?*

ORGANIZER: *Yes. Points at her. You?*

EVA: *Schlesinger Eva.*

ORGANIZER: *You are she?*

EVA: *Me?*

ORGANIZER: *Eva?*

EVA: Yes, sir.

ORGANIZER: It appears that your English family have been delayed.

EVA: Das verstehe ich nicht. *[Translation: I don't understand, sir.]*

ORGANIZER: *Miming with hands and talking very slowly,* Your ... English mother ... Mutter?

EVA: Mutter.

ORGANIZER: *Miming graphically,* Not coming yet!

EVA: Keiner kommt mich abholen? *[Translation: No one's coming to meet me?]*

ORGANIZER: *Nodding,* That's right.

EVA: Gar keiner? *[Translation: No one at all?]*

ORGANIZER: *Nodding,* That's right.

EVA: Meine Mutter hat aber gesagt, dass hier eine Familie fdr Imich ist. Sie hat gesagt, das ist alles besprochen. *[Translation: But my mother said that I had a family here. She said it had been arranged.] She starts crying.*

ORGANIZER: What is it about me that gets them all crying?

EVA: Ich will meine Eltern haben. *[Translation: I want my parents.]*

ORGANIZER: I'm sorry, love. I can't understand a word you're saying.

EVA: Und wer wird kummert sich um mich? *[Translation: Who will look after me?]*

ORGANIZER: She'll be here soon.

EVA: Wo, soll ich denn hin? *[Translation: Where will I go?]*

ORGANIZER: You've just got to wait.

EVA: Bitte, schicken Sie mich nicht zuruck nach Deutschland. *[Translation: Please don't send me back to Germany.]*

ORGANIZER: It's not the end of the world.

EVA *Sniffs.*

ORGANIZER: *Taking a hankie out of his pocket,* Here.

EVA *hesitates.*

ORGANIZER: I've not used it.

EVA *takes it, wipes her eyes and blows her nose.*

ORGANIZER: I should really leave you to use your sleeve like most of the others are doing.

EVA: *Holding out the hankie to return it,* Enstschuldigung, ich habe es ein bisschen schmutzig gemacht. *[Translation: I'm sorry. I've made it a bit dirty.]*

ORGANIZER: *Taking the hankie,* I just can't stand it when you all start crying.

EVA: Kumern Sie sich um mich? *[Translation: Will you look after me?]*

ORGANIZER: At least you've stopped now. Right. I'd better go and do that lot over there.

ORGANIZER *makes to exit.* EVA *makes to follow him.*

ORGANIZER: No. No. You stay where you are.

EVA *looks perplexed.*

ORGANIZER: *Barking at her as if to a dog,* Sit!

EVA looks at the chair and returns to it.

ORGANIZER: Stay!

← END

ORGANIZER exits.

FAITH: *Still reading, Remember that we always love and think of you. Always. No matter what. Mutti. She starts to play the mouth organ.*

EVA: *Listening to the heel of her shoe, Yes. It is. It's ticking. She tries to twist the heel. I need to know the time. Come on. She twists again with much more effort. Nothing shifts. She holds the heel to her ear and shakes it. My gold rings. I want to try on my new rings. She takes off the other shoe. My chain. I can wear it now. For the first time I can wear it out on top of my clothes. She thwacks the heels against the side of the chair. Mutti, you were right about Herr Reichman. He is a very reliable cobbler who doesn't know how to make a faulty shoe. He's locked in my keepsakes, the gold presents from you and Vati. I'll never get them now. Putting the shoe back on. They'll just be there in my shoes, jangling and ticking away, with me walking on them forever and ever. What good's a watch when you can't see its face.*

LIL enters.

FAITH: I will put the things away ...

LIL: You said that before.

FAITH: I'm just about to.

LIL: What about tea?

FAITH: I don't want any.

EVA: *Standing up, Goodbye to you.*

LIL: *To EVA, Poor lamb. You must be exhausted. Scared*

as well probably. Last thing you need is me being late. Never trust a train. I really am sorry.

EVA stands and bows.

EVA: Goodbye to you.

LIL: Goodbye?

EVA: Goodbye.

LIL: Who taught you English? German teacher was it? *Holds out her hand. Hello.*

EVA holds out her hand.

LIL: *Shaking EVA's hand, Hello.*

EVA: *Carefully, Hello.*

LIL: *Speaking slowly, My name is Mrs. Miller. Lil Miller.*

EVA: *Sehr erfreut. [Translation: I'm pleased to meet you.]*

LIL: I'm sorry, love. Don't speak German. You'll have to learn English. *Points to EVA's case and gestures "out." Set to go then?*

EVA picks up her case, puts on her coat and stands ready.

LIL: *Pointing at the label with the number and Star of David on it., What's this?*

EVA: *Ach, das ist blöd. [Translation: I hate it.]*

LIL: Why don't we get rid of it?

EVA hesitates.

LIL: You don't need it on now I've come.

EVA: *Und wenn ich meine Nummer vergesse? [Translation: What if I forget my number?]*